



JOHNSONIAN NEWS LETTER

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18th Century Newspapers

The response to our suggestion in the last issue that we do more about publicizing the whereabouts in this country of long runs of English 18th century newspapers has been excellent. Later on in this issue you will find listed the major holdings of two university libraries. In our next issue we hope to have more, and also some definite information concerning the ACLS British photographic project, the work of the Library of Congress in providing a thorough check-list, and the labors of the Philadelphia Bibliographical Center at the Univ. of Pennsylvania.

A number of our readers have sent in comments. Emmett Avery (Wash. State) writes: "I was interested in your discussion of the use of newspapers, and I agree fully that they represent a very valuable and interesting source of material. I spent the summers of 1932 and 1938 in the British Museum, devoting nearly all of my time to the Burney newspapers in an effort to complete my calendar of theatrical performances, which is now relatively full for 1660-1810. If there is any way that a cooperative venture for micro-filming the major London papers, especially before 1750, could be achieved, it would be of immense aid to all of us."

Arthur Secord (Ill.) adds: "A feature of the newspapers which has been very useful to me is the report of ship movements in English ports. In the *London Gazette* of the late seventeenth century, fleets, convoys, and often individual merchant vessels to and from America, Africa, India, and elsewhere can be traced from port to port in dispatches from Falmouth, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Deal, and Gravesend or 'the river.' Usually the commander of a ship is named with his vessel, its destination, the point from which it has sailed, and its home port. Early in the eighteenth century the *London Gazette* discontinued these reports, but

various other newspapers continued them. For those vessels which got into the North Atlantic ports in America, the *Boston News-Letter* gives a good record, so that one can sometimes check a vessel at both ends of its journey. The *B.N.* is good also on the activity of traders and pirates along the Virginia-Carolina coast and in the West Indies."

G.S. Alleman (now at Rutgers Univ. in Newark), on the other hand, points out some of the dangers of using old newspapers: "In plugging newspapers, how about some caveats? You are now among those who have shown that letters must be used with caution. How about newspapers? Maybe a man can get facts of publication from them, but if he attempts to use them for biographical material he needs to know who hated whom and why, just as he does today. The ordinary journalist was a purchaseable liar, puffer, and character ruiner. If you send a graduate student to the newspapers, he needs a conversion chart. And it doesn't exist. Here's a cooperative project that would occupy the M.L.A. groups collectively for the next 50 years: 'Materials for a Tentative Guide to the Prejudices, Distortions, Special Interests, and Corruption of the Press in the Eighteenth Century.'"

Granted! But your editor would also reply that, with all the pitfalls and dangers, there still is a treasure of valid information hitherto untapped in the London newspapers of our period. and it is up to us to make it available for graduate students.

One of the chief difficulties in the extensive use of microfilm, as Secord points out, has been that the rolls of film ordered by researchers have often piled up in large quantity before the libraries and staffs have been equipped to handle them efficiently. But librarians are now aware of the problem, and we may expect better procedures of cataloguing and handling. For example, at Columbia University, with the acquisition of great masses of films, a completely new set-up is being planned.

Newspapers at University of Illinois

Through the help of Arthur Secord and Earl Wasserman, we are able to list the following as available in Urbana (a selected list of the more important items). As Secord remarks, their chief treasure is an unbroken file of the *London Gazette* from the beginning in 1665 to April 1701. Additional runs in film for 1705, 1715-20, 1728 are also available. They have a film of the *Daily Courant* for Nos. 1, 96-138, 140-2553 (11 March 1702 — 29 Dec. 1709;

scattered numbers of the *Post Boy*, *Flying Post*, etc. (1695-1728); *Mist's Weekly Journal or Saturday Post* (film, 1717); *General Evening Post* (originals, Sept. 1739-Oct. 1750); *Lloyd's Evening Post and British Chronicle* (originals, 1757-62, 1777-80).

Available also in film or photographic facsimile are a number of American periodicals with significance in English affairs. For example, there are the *American Weekly Mercury*, Philadelphia (film, 1719-1746; *Boston News-Letter*, later *Massachusetts Gazette and Boston News-Letter* (facsimile, 1704-1776); *Connecticut Courant* Hartford (film, 1764-1788); *Maryland Gazette*, Annapolis (film, 1745 into the 19th century); *Newport Mercury* (facsimile, 1758-1800); *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Philadelphia (film, 1728-1789).

Newspapers at State College of Washington

Emmett L. Avery sends word that at Pullman, Washington, there is a film of the *Daily Advertiser* from 1731 through 1749. More will gradually be added to this run. In microfilm also (some the property of Avery himself) are the original numbers of the *Spectator*, the *Grub Street Journal*, Aaron Hill's *The Prompter*, and the *Daily Courant*, 1702-1709. Shorter runs of original issues of various papers cannot be listed here, but the *London Journal*, fairly complete for May 1721 to August 1724 may be mentioned.

Johnson Birthday Celebrations

On Saturday, Sept. 20, at the Guildhall in Lichfield, was held the annual commemoration of Johnson's birth in his native city. There were toasts and speeches by the Mayor, S. C. Roberts, Willard Connely, Sir Norman Haworth, and Laurence Meynell. The report brought back by Donald and Mary Hyde, the only American visitors present, is that the celebration was quite up to pre-war standards. If any of you remember what those were, you will know what a delightful evening it was.

Because the Donald Hydes were in England in September, they were forced to give up plans for an American celebration of Johnson's birthday. Instead, Alfred and Elizabeth Kay, of Hidden River Farm, Chester, New Jersey, were hosts for a delightful Johnsonian dinner on October 11. Donald Hyde described the Lichfield dinner; Chauncey Tinker spoke of two great Johnsonian collectors, A. Edward Newton and R. B. Adam; Katharine Balderston,

President Dodds of Princeton, your editor, and others spoke briefly; and everyone had a most enjoyable evening. A beautifully designed reprint of James Jenks' *A Treatise of All Sorts of Foods, etc.* (London, 1768) was presented to each guest. Certainly, ardent Johnsonians owe a great debt of gratitude to the Kays.

The Vanity of Anti-Johnsonian Wishes

At the recent Johnsonian dinner in New Jersey, Fritz Liebert (Yale) read a witty set of verses (written originally for the celebration last year) in which he "pulls out all the stops of the organ."

An Ode upon the 237th Birthday of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.

Exhibiting a View of Literature
For Near Two and a Half Centuries
Since He Flourished.

Let observation, with intensive sight,
Survey mankind, from Johnson to tonight;
Remark each trenchant mind, each skilful pen,
And scan with care the very hearts of men;
Then say for noble soul and mental vigor
That Johnson cuts by far the greatest figure.
Where else is found a never-failing wit,
Fearless to give or to return a hit?
And where a style both nervous and precise,
As bold as thunder, but with balance nice?
And where (let this be first) a heart so pure,
Of man so anxious, and of God so sure,
That, though laid bare as never man's before,
No vice is found, but virtue always more?
Nowhere will view discover, in her scan,
At once so great and so complete a man.
In his own time he dominates the scene;
Reynolds and Garrick did not think it mean
To wait upon him and confess his spell;
For Burke it was enough to ring the bell;
Goldy beneath his envy hid respect.
By free consent he ruled o'er these elect.
Who then of his own time can challenge him?
In Johnson's sunlight all their names are dim.
The sneering Gibbon and the timid Gray,

The posing Sterne, are quickly turned away.
 Does Walpole rise, armed with a lengthy letter?
 The reeling Stanhope once received a better.
 No time more recent yields a likely choice.
 For randy Byron who will raise a voice?
 Had Wordsworth wit? Had Shelley moral force?
 Is not Keats pallid? Is not Burns too coarse?
 Pass further down the list; is there not one
 Whose light is visible in Johnson's sun?
 In full-blown dignity Macaulay stands,
 Law in his voice, and fortune in his hands.
 Turn'd by his nod the stream of honour flows,
 His smile alone security bestows.
 Critic and poet, historian and peer,
 From him must Johnson's fame recoil in fear?
 Not so, for quick and fatal flaw appears
 To bring to earth this brightest of careers
 So great and so complete. For, mark you this,
 More than the truth he loved his emphasis.
 On what rock stands the Caledonian pride?
 How just its hopes let mighty Scott decide.
 A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
 No dangers fright him, and no labors tire.
 A man complete and great, he stands serene,
 A mind of vigor and a heart that's clean.
 But stay. In vivid story or in song
 Does he concern himself with right and wrong?
 Not so. As moralist, does he not fail?
 He points no moral, just adorns a tale.
 Nor can our own time any name supply.
 It is not hard to see the reason why,
 For all our sins come quickly home to roost;
 We're sicklied o'er with the pale cast of Proust.
 He only, then, survives the rigid test;
 He only earns the title of "The Best."
 So then to Johnson let us take a glass
 And toast the name which no one shall surpass.
 Drink deep, whether in claret, port, or brandy
 (Or any other potable that's handy)
 To him who stands from age to age the same,
 To Dr. Samuel Johnson's glorious name.

Miscellaneous News Items

Marjorie Nicolson (Columbia) has been awarded the Rose Mary Crawshay Prize given by the British Academy for her recent *Newton Demands the Muse*.

Geoffrey Tillotson (23 Tanza Rd., London N.W. 3) writes: "I should be grateful if you would invite *JNL* readers to send me anything they want to see corrected in my volume of the Twickenham Pope. It is due for a second edition, when I can get down to preparing it."

Bill Parker, new Secretary of the M.L.A., has a daughter named Pamela (P.M.L.A.)!

E. G. Cox is now Professor Emeritus at the Univ. of Wash., but is still Managing Editor of *MLQ*. He is now reading proof of the third volume of his bibliography of travel literature.

C. L. Tracy is now at the Univ. of New Brunswick, Fredericton, N.B. Homer Caskey is back at Ohio Univ., Athens, Ohio, after a long period of convalescence.

Dr. Johnson's walking-stick or "walkingstaff" as he defined it in his *Dictionary*, has come to an honored resting place in the Library of Congress alongside a similar stick once owned by Dickens. Used upon dress occasions only, for upon his tour he used an ordinary oaken staff, the stick is made of polished black-horn of an oryx, thick-ribbed and slightly curving at the top. A silver snuffbox forms the head of the cane, with a smoky brown cairngorm set in its lid. A black carrying cord which permitted the cane to be hung from the wrist, according to the fashion, enabled the wearer to reach easily with his other hand for that indispensable stimulant of the English gentleman. It is the gift of Mrs. Florence Bayard Hilles of Wilmington, Delaware.

M.L.A. Programs

Ben Boyce has arranged an all-Defoe program for Group VII this Christmas at Detroit. The three who will read papers are T. F. M. Newton, J. R. Moore, and Arthur Secord.

Ned McAdam is planning a program for Group VIII concerned chiefly with the novelists.

Dick Boys has generously agreed to take charge of the 18th Century luncheon, to be held immediately after the Group VIII meeting. You will hear more of the actual plans for this gathering in the near future.

Recent Books

An important volume for all students of the period is Earl R. Wasserman's *Elizabethan Poetry in the Eighteenth Century*, just issued by the Univ. of Ill. Press. Here are interesting studies of the attitude of 18th century readers towards Shakespeare, Spenser, Elizabethan lyrics, etc.

A publication which many of you might miss is Mary Cathryne Park's "Joseph Priestley and the Problem of Pantisocracy" in *Proceedings of the Delaware County Institute of Science, Media, Pa.*, July 1947.

All teachers of the 18th century will welcome the low cost portfolio of Hogarth prints, issued by The Touchstone Press, 194 W. 10th St., New York 14. Ten excellent facsimile reproductions in a folder for only one dollar is certainly a bargain. As Earl Britton (Mich.), who called this portfolio to our attention, points out, these prints are excellent for class work and also for framing.

We wish to thank O. D. Savage for a copy of his little book *London Spotlights for Sightseers*, which will be useful to many of our members on their next visit to London.

A few other works which may be listed are: Fred W. Boege's *Smollett's Reputation as a Novelist* (Princeton); Ruthven Todd's *Tracks in the Snow: Studies in English Science and Art*; and Arundell Esdaile's *The British Museum Library: a Short History and Survey* (1946).

The Hooded Hawk

Why is it that competent scholars so often cannot write, and those with a flare for expression are usually so cavalier about the facts? These are age-old complaints. Take, for example, the new life of Boswell by D. B. Wyndham Lewis, now issued in this country by Longmans. Brilliantly written in spots, it fails to give a true portrait of Boswell and his friends. Of course, Lewis never for a moment attempts to give an objective, unbiased picture. He hates the Whigs and protestants so bitterly that almost everything is colored and distorted by his subjective predisposition. He rides his hobbies throughout, letting the facts take care of themselves.

Ostensibly the book is a defense of Boswell, but the author uses a strange method to accomplish this end — stressing the

more melodramatic and sensational aspects of his hero's life, and sneering at the abilities of Dr. Johnson and Boswell's other acquaintances. And because he scorns to consult the dry-as-dust scholarly research on Boswell, he misses many opportunities to show the breadth and variety of Boswell's character. It would be fruitless to attempt to list all the errors — he has Boswell meeting Henry Thrale in Italy in 1765, for example, and this is only one of a score of absurd blunders. As a result, the book is a superficial, sensational portrait, based on prejudice and an insufficient examination of all the evidence. But like so many similar bad books, it will probably be widely read and admired.

English Institute Essays, 1946

Scheduled for publication by the Columbia Press about the middle of November is the fifth selection of papers presented at the annual meeting of the English Institute. This year's volume will contain much to interest our readers: Douglas Bush on Milton; Louis Landa on Swift (as well as papers by Carlos Baker and Marion Witt on Shelley and Yeats); and a series of discussions on the methods of literary studies given by René Wellek, Cleanth Brooks, Allan Downer, and E. L. McAdam, Jr. Be sure to order your copy at once (\$2.50), and see that your library has one for reference.

Some Recent Articles

One of our readers has pointed out that we failed to notice two interesting articles in the *Huntington Library Quarterly* for Nov. 1946: Godfrey Davies', "The Conclusion of Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*," and H. T. Swedenberg's "George Stepney, My Lord Dorset's Boy." Another important discussion of Dryden, first presented as a paper at the M.L.A., is Ruth Wallerstein's "On the Death of Mrs. Killigrew; the Perfecting of a Genre," *SP*, July 1947.

Two recent articles on masterpieces of the early 18th century are: Z. S. Fink's "Political Theory in *Gulliver's Travels*," *ELH*, June 1947; and William Frost's "'The Rape of the Lock' and Pope's Homer," *MLQ*, Sept. 1947.

Among general discussions there are: A. R. Humphreys' "The Eternal Fitness of Things: an Aspect of Eighteenth-Century Thought," *MLR*, April 1947; Earl R. Wasserman's "The Sympathetic

Imagination in Eighteenth-Century Theories of Acting," *JEGP*, July 1947; Samuel Klinger's "Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* in the Eighteenth Century Mode," *Univ. of Toronto Quarterly*, July 1947; Ernest Mossner's, "David Hume's 'An Historical Essay on Chivalry and Modern Honour,'" *MP*, Aug. 1947. Students of the History of Ideas will also, we know, wish to read the controversy between Henry Veatch of Indiana Univ. and Arthur O. Lovejoy, connected with the latter's work on the *The Great Chain of Being*. See articles in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* for March and June 1947.

Boswellians will be much interested in L. F. Powell's "The Anonymous Designations in Boswell's 'Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides' and Their Identification," *Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions*, II, Part 4, 1946 (a tabulated list is given, in which all we know concerning the anonymous references is gathered together). In *Country Life* for April 25, 1947, there is a description by Christopher Hussey of Malahide Castle, with excellent photographs of many of the rooms. "Boswell's Interviews with Gottsched and Gellert" is the title of an article by D. V. B. Hegeman in *JEGP*, July 1947.

For Johnsonians there are Herman Liebert's important new ascription to Johnson of some revisions of Henry Lucas's tragedy *The Earl of Somerset* in *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, third quarter 1947; W. K. Wimsatt, Jr.'s "Johnson on Electricity," *RES*, July 1947; an article on the prayers entitled "Mental Vellications" in the *British Weekly*, May 8, 1947; and some comments and reproductions from the Dictionary in the Merriam Co.'s *Noah's Ark*, a brochure recently published in celebration of their hundredth anniversary as publishers of Webster's Dictionary.

Johnson and Bishop Berkeley

We hope every one of you will read the recent article "Dr. Johnson's Refutation of Bishop Berkeley," by the philosopher H. F. Hallett of King's College, London, which appeared in *Mind* for April 1947. Hallett shows that Johnson's notorious refutation of Berkeley, as reported in the *Life* by Boswell, has not been rightly understood. It has generally been thought that Johnson completely missed the point of Berkeley's philosophy, but Hallett insists that "it is high time that better justice be done Dr. Johnson in this matter." The familiar refutation is not sophistical. We have missed the whole point of Boswell's story. You

remember that Johnson struck his foot "with mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it"; then exclaimed "I refute it *thus*." The important word in the story is "rebounded." It was not that he "*felt* the stone, but that there was 'action and reaction' between the body and the stone." We will not further summarize the intricate philosophical explication of the remark, for it cannot be effectively condensed, but certainly everyone interested in 18th century thought should examine it for himself.

The Oberlin Wager Mezzotint Collection

Chester L. Shaver (Oberlin) writes:

"You may be interested in learning of something we have done at Oberlin to keep green the memory of Johnson and one of his admirers. Just a month ago the college opened for use in our library the Wager Memorial Room, in honor of Professor C. H. A. Wager, who died in 1939. Professor Wager had been head of this department for more than thirty years. Always a devoted student of the eighteenth century, he regularly offered a course in Burke and from time to time directed seminars in Johnson and his circle. Some ten years before his death he began to collect mezzotint portraits of the salient figures, political and literary, of the second half of the century. When he died, the number of items in this collection ran to almost a hundred. It was to house a part of this collection and thus to commemorate Professor Wager's years of distinguished and influential teaching that the room was built.

"The room serves primarily as a seminar room for this department. It contains many books from Professor Wager's own library, which was especially rich in eighteenth-century volumes. Ten of the mezzotints, including portraits of Burke, Fox, and Garrick, hang on opposite walls above the shelving. In a case along a third wall are deep trays which will eventually hold the unframed engravings, among which are several political cartoons and two or three caricatures of Johnson and Boswell on tour. I might add that the room is equipped for lantern slide projection, so that we may employ other types of visual aid to bring Johnson's epoch home to our classes by means additional to the printed word.

"We earnestly hope that any Johnsonians who happen to be passing through Oberlin will stop long enough to visit the room. At some future date it should be possible to bring out a small

catalogue describing all the mezzotints that will be available."

A catalogue of the collection as it stood in 1932, with Dr. Johnson's portrait as frontispiece, was printed; and we will now eagerly await the preparation of the final listing.

A Nineteenth Century View of Biography

Willard Bonner (Buffalo) sends on an interesting excerpt from a recent book by Benjamin P. Thomas called *Portrait for Posterity* (page 22). Grant Goodrich, a Chicago lawyer and former associate of Abraham Lincoln, wrote to William H. Herndon, Lincoln's law partner in the Springfield days (Herndon, who knew Lincoln well, had been giving a series of lectures on the real Lincoln calculated to counteract the whitewash being spread by Josiah G. Holland):

"In my opinion you are the last man who should attempt to write a life of Lincoln. Your long and intimate association with him, unfits you for the task. No one holding the intimate relations to another which you did to him ever has succeeded.... In intimate association, we fix upon some characteristic or peculiarity, & fail to catch other lineaments.... In the distance we see the bold outline of the mountain; its summit wrapped in sunshine, or swathed in cloud. When we approach it, we catch a view of the deep, it may be dark gorges, the rugged cliffs, the lean rocks, and distorted outlines. So in the characters of our dearest friends. See how Boswell, with all his literary abilities failed in his Life of Johnson. No blow so severe was ever struck at Johnson. Think of these things."

A Survey of Recent Scholarship

In a recent issue (Vol. I, No. 13-14, pp. 658-76) of the new international bulletin of contemporary scholarship called *Erasmus*, published in Brussels, there is a very interesting survey "Studies in Eighteenth Century Literature, 1938-1945," by René Wellek (Yale). Here is a stimulating critical analysis of the most important research to appear during the war years, which every one of you will wish to see. Readers should be warned that through some mix-up in the printer's office the footnote numbers from 50 through 98 do not agree with references in the text.

